

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 28, 2011

The City Council Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 28th day of April, 2011, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilmembers Butler, Cubberley, Kovach,
Chairman Quinn

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
Mr. Cody Ponder, Grants Specialist II for OU
Ms. Linda Price, Revitalization Manager
Mayor Cindy Rosenthal
Mr. Wayne Wickman, OU Transit Operations
Manager
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

DISCUSSION REGARDING CART RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE.

Mr. Cody Ponder, Grants Specialist II for OU, reported no major changes in ridership. He said the new automated passenger counting system is very precise and Staff is able to obtain ridership information by parameters or routes as well as ridership percentages by hour of the day, day of the week, hour by hour, and/or specific days.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Month of March 2011

UPDATE ON CONGRESSMAN TOM COLE'S VISIT TO NORMAN TO SEE CART'S NEW COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS VEHICLES.

Congressman Tom Cole was instrumental in the passage of an earmark for CART to purchase six compressed natural gas (CNG) busses and CART arranged a ribbon cutting ceremony with Congressman Cole on Tuesday, April 26th.

Mr. Wayne Wickman, OU Transit Operations Manager, said Congressman Cole boarded a CNG bus near his office at 24th Avenue S.W. and Lindsey Street to ride to the South Oval of the campus where he met Mayor Rosenthal and other dignitaries and transferred to a CNG bus traveling to CART's Transportation Operations Center. He said the Congressman toured the Operations and Fleet Services Facility. He said CART had inherited a Model T vehicle painted with OU colors and logo and Fleet Services was estimating costs to get the vehicle running and refurbished. He said Congressman Cole was very interested in the vehicle. Mr. Wickman said the vehicle needs to be completely remodeled and OU is weighing their options on whether or not to remodel

Items submitted for the record

1. City Transportation Committee Update dated April 28, 2011

REVIEW OF THE DUMP THE PUMP PROCLAMATION.

Chairman Quinn asked if there were any changes the Committee would like to make to the proclamation. Mr. Ponder said, last year, the City waived the fee for park rental and requirements for porta potties and asked if they would do that again this year and Chairman Quinn felt that would not be a problem. Mayor Rosenthal agreed and felt the 1 1/2 hour duration of the event would not warrant porta potties. Councilmember Kovach asked that language be included in the proclamation regarding reducing traffic congestion. Councilmember Butler said Section 4 states that CART is committed to alternative fuels and suggested adding "CART and the City of Norman are committed to alternative fuels." Chairman Quinn said the proclamation will be placed on the City Council's June 14th agenda.

Items submitted for the record

1. Draft Dump the Pump Proclamation

UPDATE ON THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S (ODOT) PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING THE STATE HIGHWAY 9 PROJECT.

Mr. O'Leary said the State Highway 9 (SH 9) Project is a large project that would widen SH 9 from I-35 to the east City limits ultimately. He said the current project will widen SH 9 from 24th Avenue S.E. to 84th Avenue S.E. He said the environmental assessment began in 2004 and the final public hearing was held April 21st. He said the project cost \$18.5 million. He said there are two pieces; 24th Avenue S.E. to 48th Avenue S.E. will be an urban section and 48th Avenue to 84th Avenue, a rural section; however, the project may end at 72nd Avenue S.E. due to funding issues.

Mr. O'Leary displayed pictures of similar projects to give the Committee an idea of how the SH 9 Project would look for the urban and rural sections. He said the urban section would include urban gutter, underground drainage, landscaped median, and a bike path on the north side. He said the City will be in charge of the Bike Path Project. He said the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) will obtain rights-of-way (ROW) and construct all highway related construction prior to the City's construction of the bike path. Mr. O'Leary said the project could begin construction in 2013.

Chairman Quinn said there was a time when ODOT refused to consider bike paths in their plan and now they are acquiring the ROW and allowing the City to construct the bike path.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint entitled, "State Highway 9 Widening and Reconstruction," dated April 28, 2011
2. Environmental Assessment for Proposed Reconstruction of State Highway 9 from 24th Avenue S.E. and 84th Avenue S.E. Within the Corporate Limits of the City of Norman Cleveland County prepared by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation dated March 31, 2011
3. Environmental Assessment History prepared by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation

INFORMATION REGARDING A PUBLIC HEARING TO BE PRESENTED BY THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) ON PLANS FOR THE I-35 SOUTH PROJECT FROM MAIN STREET TO THE CANADIAN RIVER BRIDGE.

Mr. O'Leary said the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is running behind on the environmental assessment process for the I-35 South Project. He said the FHWA reviews all projects and they do not like the configuration of the Robinson Street Underpass, which Staff thought was out of the scope of the I-35 South Project. He said the FHWA is questioning the southwest quadrant of I-35 and Robinson Street where the frontage road dead ends at the hotel area. Mr. O'Leary believes the plans will pass, but the FHWA will compel ODOT and the City to "do something" about the dead end in the future. Councilmember Kovach asked what end result they are looking for and Mr. O'Leary said the dead end is unconventional and he is reviewing the history as to why the frontage road dead ends into a hotel parking lot. He believes the FHWA will allow ODOT to go forward with the project then meet to talk about the Robinson Interchange that may include the frontage road issue, which he believes will actually benefit the City.

Mr. O'Leary highlighted aspects of the project and said the project would probably be divided into three pieces with the first piece being the Main Street Interchange, then Highway 9 East, and back to Lindsey Street. Mayor Rosenthal said she was concerned about the depiction of a potential noise wall at 24th Avenue West in the plan it has not been officially included in the final environmental assessment. Mr. O'Leary said he did believe ODOT is open to building the noise wall but the question would be where it will begin and end. Councilmember Kovach asked if there was any indication as to whether or not the noise wall would be built before or after the project and Mr. O'Leary said that has not been determined, but there seemed to be a sentiment that the wall would be built prior to construction of the project.

Mr. O'Leary displayed the various art themes for the Main Street, Lindsey Street, and I-35 at SH 9 East interchange bridges and said ODOT has included the artwork in their budget.

The Committee discussed the various interchange design ideas and which design would leave the smallest footprint and still allow the best traffic flow. Councilmember Kovach asked about the impact to Ed Noble Parkway in the Main Street design and Mr. O'Leary said that is unknown, but Staff is interested in that also because all of the design plans affect City streets or intersections. He said each design has its pros and cons. Mr. O'Leary said ODOT will bring the designs forward for a public hearing probably within the next 60 days.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint entitled, "Comprehensive Transportation Plan, City of Norman, Transportation Committee Meeting," dated March 24, 2011

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

Capitol Decisions, Inc., Update. Mayor Rosenthal said she had received an e-mail from Mr. J.R. Rescovac, Capitol Decisions, Inc., regarding an update on CART's request to be removed from a Large Urban Area to a Small Urban Area in order to avoid losing operating funds. Mr. Rescovac reported the Environmental Working Group (EWG) Staff is working on language for an amendment to attach to the Federal Highway Bill for that purpose.

Miscellaneous Discussion, continued:

Relocation of bus stops. Mr. Wickman said the City of Norman recently began dismantling a bus stop at the Norman Housing Authority located on Berry Road without notice to CART, which disrupted passenger service on that route. He said the City was supposed to build the new stop prior to dismantling the old stop, which did not happen. He requested that, in the future, the City give CART advance notice on any construction that would affect bus routes. He said the construction of the new bus stop did not take a long period of time, but CART needs time to alert passengers of any changes before construction begins. Ms. Linda Price, Revitalization Manager, asked how far the stop was moved and Mr. Wickman said approximately 75 feet north of Denison Street. Ms. Price said she thought any relocation of bus stops required City Council approval and Mr. Wickman said this relocation was not approved by Council.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said the stop was moved to accommodate an American Disability Act (ADA) complaint from a resident stating that said in order to access the bus stop he had to cross Berry Road and the nearest crosswalk is the school crosswalk at Denison. Mr. O'Leary said having two crosswalks within 100 feet of each other was not an option so the City decided to move the bus stop to the existing crosswalk to accommodate the ADA concern. He said the contractor was supposed to notify CART, but the work had already started before City Staff learned that CART had not been notified. Mr. Ponder said CART did meet with City Staff during construction and the new location is a great improvement and much safer for all riders.

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East Lindsey Street Widening Project. Mr. O'Leary said Shell Construction was the low bidder for the East Lindsey Street Widening Project. He said the most difficult part of the project will be construction of the Bishop Creek Bridge or box culvert between Jenkins Avenue and Classen Boulevard. He said that section of Lindsey Street must be closed for that construction and the City has written a very exclusive provision into the contract that allows the contractor a maximum 28 day closure between May 16 and August 15, 2011. He said once the contractor selects the 28 day period, City Staff will contact CART. Councilmember Cubberley asked if notice to the neighborhood would be given and Mr. O'Leary said absolutely. Mr. O'Leary said there is a severe penalty if the 28 days are not met. Councilmember Cubberley asked how many bus routes would be affected. Mr. Wickman said two routes and CART would change the route for the 28 day period and was happy Lindsey Street would remain open for travel during the rest of the construction period.

Ms. Janet Oaks, Progressive Independence, asked what the project entailed and Mr. O'Leary said the project would include a landscaped median and perimeter and two ten foot wide bike paths on each side. Ms. Oaks asked what would happen to the Duck Pond and Mr. O'Leary said the only impact to the Duck Pond would be to the bridge culvert that feeds the pond. He said the most challenging provision is for the removal, restoration, and reinstallation of some stone pillars that are considered historic structures. He said they will be carefully enveloped, removed, and replaced after construction is complete.

Miscellaneous Discussion, continued:

Flashing Yellow Arrows. Mr. O'Leary said Staff partnered with the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication to produce videos to educate the public about the new flashing yellow arrows on signal lights. He played two of the three videos that are currently on the City's website in the Public Works/Traffic Department section. Mayor Rosenthal suggested placing a link to the videos on the homepage. Councilmember Cubberley felt the videos are very short and educational and suggested playing one of them prior to Council meetings. Councilmember Kovach asked if the videos were on Channel 20 and Mr. O'Leary said yes. Chairman Quinn asked if there had been any change in traffic accidents since introducing the yellow flashing arrows and Mr. O'Leary said Staff is still collecting data. He said public feedback has been very positive.

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Robinson Street Grade Separation Project. Chairman Quinn asked Mr. O'Leary to give a brief synopsis of the Robinson Street Grade Separation Project delays. Mr. O'Leary said a temporary bridge was installed as a shoofly for the railroad tracks. The contractor chose the bridge option opposed to an earthen embankment option because it was cheaper and they had used the bridge on previous projects. He said getting approval from ODOT to use the bridge instead of the earthen embankment caused the first delay. He said once the contractor installed the bridge, they missed the elevation so the rails had to be modified through ballasts to get the proper elevation. He said that culminated in having to adjust the Robinson Street detour to match the new rail elevation and when Burling Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) officials surveyed the rails, they would not approve the horizontal or vertical positioning. He said the contractor argued and did their own survey and, again, elevation did not meet BNSF specifications. He said there is currently quite a bit of debate going back and forth between the contractor and BNSF, but he feels that everything will be worked out soon. He is unsure how this affects the overall project, but believes the contractor will catch up with the project timeline. Councilmember Cubberley asked if the contractor had experience working with the railroad and Mr. O'Leary said yes, and everyone is confused as to why they have had so many problems.

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Intermodal Transportation Hub Study. Chairman Quinn said the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is having a public meeting on the Intermodal Transportation Hub Study on Thursday, May 5th at 5:00 p.m. Councilmember Butler said the Intermodal Transportation Hub Advisory Committee met last week to discuss potential hub sites and narrowed the list from ten to one, which is the current Santa Fe Station in Oklahoma City. She said the committee was looking for a site that would accommodate freight; commuter rail; high speed rail; bus service; urban space; multi-use development; and pedestrian traffic. She said ACOG will hold public meetings and search out funding opportunities.

Items submitted for the record

1. Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) New Brief regarding an Intermodal Hub Study Meeting scheduled Thursday, May 5th, dated April 27, 2011

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Miscellaneous Discussion, continued:

Endeavor 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. Councilmember Butler said ACOG adopted the Endeavor 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, which is the first modern transportation plan that incorporates multi-modal plans. She said, unfortunately, there is not extra money for better public transportation. She said the goals in the plan will include statistics on the impact to neighborhoods and the environment.

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Downtown West Main Street Enhancement Project. Chairman Quinn asked if Staff had any information about the grant for downtown renovation and Mr. O'Leary said he expects to hear something within 30 days.

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Passenger Commuter Rail. Mayor Rosenthal asked if the City is going to formulate a resolution on the City's position for a passenger rail system and Chairman Quinn said it needs to be done. Mayor Rosenthal said if Council did not want a resolution, she would be glad to send letter cosigned by the Transportation Committee Chair. Chairman Quinn asked who would draft the letter or resolution and Mr. O'Leary said he would.

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The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor